

A Bit of Both

Qadariya says we achieve what we want to, Jabariya says everything is pre-determined, Wasatiya takes middle ground, writes MAULANA WAHIDUDDIN KHAN

Is man the master of his own destiny or is there a power that determines his fate? There's a grey zone out here, because while we are free to do what we want and our experience often shows that things are not completely under our control. Therefore it does seem sometimes as though there is an element of pre-determination.

The Quran says there are two aspects to this issue: "And that man shall have only that for which he strives" (53:39). But another verse seems to convey just the opposite: "But you cannot will it unless God, the Lord of the Universe, so wills it" (81:29).

In the light of the two diametrically opposite statements regarding karma and destiny, Muslim scholars have divided themselves into two groups. The first group, the Qadariya, believes that man can achieve whatever he wants to. The second group, the Jabariya, believes that everything is pre-determined by God.


There is a third group of Muslim jurists who do not accept either of these views. They claim that there is a third position which seems more logi-

cal. This group calls itself the Wasatiya.

After an in-depth study of all three positions, I tend to put my weight behind the third. I believe that it is a 50-50 situation. That is, 50 per cent of all that happens is because of God's will, and the other 50 per cent is the result of our own actions. We are free to do what we want. Experience shows that we can chart out destiny through our actions. But there are limitations to freedom of action. We can use only those opportunities that are present in our environment. These opportunities can be called natural infrastructure. This infrastructure is created and main-

tained by the Almighty. We may be free but are hemmed in by divine infrastructure within which we operate.

Wasatiya, the middle position, is the only proposition that can explain this duality. It provides an explanation of man's freedom of action and at the same time, explains what I have called a divine infrastructure. The Wasatiya concept explains all related questions in a logical way. Apart from the philosophical aspect, the middle concept also has ethical relevance; it creates a balanced personality. It inculcates a realistic approach to life. When a man feels that he is free, his sense of freedom fosters a spirit of determination. But when he finds that his freedom depends on divine infrastructure, he becomes modest. These two aspects of his personality — determination and modesty — make him a balanced person. A scientific concept is one that is based on facts and Wasatiya explains both the inner freedom of an individual and the effect of external infrastructure on his personality. ■



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